

Message Text

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SUBJ: NASSAU GUARDIAN EDITORIAL -- WEALTH AND WORTH

1. EMBASSY SUBMITS IN ITS ENTIRETY NASSAU GUARDIAN EDITORIAL WHICH APPEARED MARCH 15. EDITORIAL IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT, IN OUR OPINION FOR SEVERAL REASONS. (A) IT IS THE FIRST TIME, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THAT USUALLY BLAND AND OVERLY RESTRAINED (BUT NEVERTHELESS RESPECTED) GUARDIAN HAS TAKEN SUCH AN OPEN STANCE WITH THE PLP GOVERNMENT; (B) IT HAS ALREADY CREATED QUITE A STIR THROUGHOUT NASSAU AND IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE AS WELL AS PUBLICLY IN THE PULPITS IN DAYS TO COME. (C) WHILE IT REFERS IN FACT TO "TIGER FINLAYSON" COMMONLY CONSIDERED AS FRONT MAN FOR P.M. PINDLING, IT NEVERTHELESS INDICTS THE ENTIRE PLP ESTABLISHMENT. (D) IT IS THE WORK OF JEANNIE THOMPSON WHO HAS LONG WRITTEN FEATURE STORIES FOR THE PAPER BUT WHO ON HER RETURN FROM A YEAR ABROAD IN THE UK HAS RECENTLY BEEN GIVEN EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL. MISS THOMPSON'S SINCERITY IN HER CONVICTION THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG IN BAHAMIAN SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY KNOWN TO HER FRIENDS AND WITH THE RETIREMENT OF HER FATHER, E.A. THOMPSON, FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE (PERM SEC MIN OF AGRICULTURE) SHE SEEMS TO BE LESS RETICENT IN SHARING IT WITH HER READERS. FINALLY WE IN THE EMBASSY FEEL THAT IT GIVES A VERY ACCURATE FEEL FOR THE BAHAMAS IN THE SPRING OF 1978 WHEN THERE IS AN

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ESTIMATED 25 - 30 PERCENT RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT, AND WHEN PLP CABINET MINISTERS HAVING VOTED ENORMOUS PAY RAISES AFTER LAST SUMMER'S ELECTIONS ARE REAPING THEIR REWARDS AND DOING VERY LITTLE MORE.

2. QUOTE WEALTH AND WORTH

IN THE DAYS WHEN THE UNITED BAHAMIAN PARTY RULED THIS LAND, THE EARLY AND MIDDLE SIXTIES MARKED A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY WHICH LASTED INTO THE EARLY SEVENTIES BEFORE THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE NEW ORDER BEGAN TO TAKE FULL EFFECT.

THE OLD U.B.P. POLITICIANS, SOME OF WHOM WERE KNOWN AS THE BAY STREET BOYS, PROFITED FROM THEIR POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AND MOST MADE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY. THE PLAIN PEOPLE MADE MONEY TOO. MANY, PRACTISING THE ECONOMY OF LIFE, MADE THEMSELVES SECURE IN THE MATTER OF REAL PROPERTY AND SAVINGS. OTHERS, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE EXPERIENCING HIGH EARNINGS, WERE NOT AS PRUDENT AND TODAY THEY REGRET IT.

THE BAY STREET BOYS HANDLED THEIR WEALTH DIFFERENTLY FROM THE STYLE WE SEE TODAY. MOST OF THEM WERE BORN TO WEALTH AND EARLY GREW ACCUSTOMED TO THE EXERCISE AND MANAGEMENT OF IT. A SMALL NUMBER OF THEM WERE SELF-MADE WITH FORTUNES FLOATED ON THE BOOTLEG BUSINESS OF THE RUM-RUNNING DAYS. WHETHER FROM INNATE ABILITY OR ACQUIRED SKILL, THEY, TOO, LEARNED TO MANAGE WEALTH AND TO PUT IT TO WORK SO THAT WHILE THEY PROFITED OTHERS GAINED ALSO.

THEIR MAIN FAILING WAS IN THE POLITICAL ASPECT WHERE IT BECAME FASHIONABLE, TO THEM, TO USE CASH AND KIND TO SUBORN DEMOCRACY IN AN ATTEMPT TO PERPETUATE THEMSELVES IN POWER. THE THEN MANNER OF LIFE SEEMED ORDAINED TO BE SO AND, AT FIRST, THERE WAS HARDLY A RIPPLE TO CHALLENGE THE ESTABLISHED ORDER OF THINGS.

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WEALTH, POWER AND AUTHORITY, IN THE POLITICAL SENSE OF AUTHORITY, WERE ALMOST SYNONYMOUS. TO BE ONE OF THE BAY STREET BOYS WAS AN ALMOST SURE PASSPORT TO WEALTH. AND TO BE WEALTHY ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY ASSURED ONE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE THEN POLITICAL PROCESS IN WHICH THE CONCEPT OF GOVERNMENT WAS NOT DEMOCRATIC AS IT IS ON PAPER TODAY. BUT, AS IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED ON SO MANY OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF KNOWN HUMAN HISTORY, THE EXERCISE OF ABSOLUTE POWER EVENTUALLY LEADS TO THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER AS SURELY AS THE FOUR SEASONS UNFAILINGLY FOLLOW EACH OTHER.

IN THE PEACEFUL POLITICAL CYCLE, THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER APPEARS TO BEGIN WITH CORRUPT PRACTICES. IT WAS SO IN THE CASE OF THE UNITED BAHAMIAN PARTY AND HUMAN NATURE HAS NOT CHANGED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY WHICH WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT WILL NOT BE SO WITH THE SUCCESSORS OF THE UBP. THE POINTERS, IF ONE WISHES TO CALL THE EVIDENCE THAT, ARE THERE. NOW WE SEE NEW POVERTY BROUGHT BY WHAT IS PLAINLY THE NEW WEALTH. THE PERIOD SINCE 1967 TO NOW WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN THE BRIGHTEST AGE IN THE TIMES OF THE BAHAMAS. BUT THE BRIGHTEST AGE CONTINUES TO BE BESET BY DARK SHADOWS. ONLY A LIMITED CIRCLE BASKS IN REAL ECONOMIC SUNSHINE.

SOME, PERHAPS NOW QUITE SURE OF WHAT MAY SEEM THEIR

MANIFEST DESTINY IN THIS LAND OF EASY-GOING AND LONG-SUFFERING PEOPLE, APPEAR PROUD TO PUBLICLY LIST THEIR MOST OBVIOUS PURPORTED ASSETS. ONE CAN MAKE CLAIMS, CREDIBLE OR INCREDIBLE. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS WHETHER THE PUBLIC BELIEVES THOSE CLAIMS - EVEN FOR ONE MOMENT.

ONE OF THE REMARKABLE THINGS ABOUT BAHAMIAN SOCIETY IS THAT WHETHER BY KINSHIP, NEIGHBOURLINESS OR FREQUENT CONTACT, ALMOST EVERYBODY KNOWS EACH OTHER. THUS THERE ARE MANY THINGS KNOWN TO PEOPLE ON THE STREET WHICH THOSE IN HIGH PLACES MAY THINK ORDINARY FOLK DO NOT KNOW. SO THAT THOSE WHO MAY WISH TO POSTURE AND TRY TO FORCE THE PUBLIC TO NOTICE THEIR NEW WEALTH, AND THEIR PURPORTED OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL OF IT, DO THEMSELVES NO GOOD. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WEALTH AND WORTH. THIS MAY BE WELL ENOUGH UNDERSTOOD BY THE POPULACE.
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BUT APPARENTLY SOME OF THOSE WHO HAVE NOW COME INTO AN EXCLUSIVE PROSPERITY DO NOT YET UNDERSTAND THAT TO BE WEALTHY MAY NOT ALSO MEAN TO BE WORTHY. UNQUOTE
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